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ABSTRACT

THE FOLLOWING IS THE FULL TEXT OF THIS DOCUMENT Far West Laboratory researchers involved in the Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study contend that increasing Academic Learning Time promotes basic skills achievement among elementary school children. During the course of the six-year study, researchers identified numerous "helpful hints" for producing increased ALT. Educational R&D Report has pulled some of these from the study's final report. 1. Teachers who allocate more time to a particular content area of the curriculum have students who achieve higher levels than teachers who allocate less time to that content area. The more time teachers spend teaching reading, for example, the greater their students' reading achievement. 2. Teachers who increase the amount of time students actually spend engaged in a learning activity will see the difference reflected in increased achievement. Allocating time for reading, in other words, isn't sufficient. The students also must be actively engaged in learning to read. 3. Teachers should ensure that the students spend over half of their time working on tasks that provide high success. Students who spend more time than the average in high-success activities have higher achievement scores. However, older students (fifth grade and over) and students generally skilled at school learning need a smaller percentage of time at the high success level. Nevertheless, it is seldom, if ever, desirable for students to be given tasks where they experience low success. 4. The BTES evidence suggests teachers who have the ability to diagnose students' skill levels generally have classrooms where students show a higher rate of engagement. 5. Frequent pupil requests for additional instructions or clarification generally are associated with low success rate. That is, frequent need for explanation may be a signal that changes in the instructional program are needed. 6. Frequently reminding students to "get back to work" when they are off task is ineffective. Students are most likely off task because the activities are too difficult. 7. The percentage of instructional time during which students receive academic feedback is positively related to student engagement rate and to achievement. Teachers should increase the use of feedback to students about their work. 8. Direct interaction between a student and a teacher about academic content is associated with increased engaged time and higher achievement. For instance, students who spend more time in small group instruction have higher rates of engagement than students who spend most of their time in independent seatwork and have little interaction with the teacher or others. 9. The use of aides, parent volunteers, cross-age tutors, and peer tutors increases the amount of interactive instruction, thus keeping engagement rates high. 10. Students who work together to reach academic goals and take responsibility for achieving them generally have higher achievement. Cooperation and student responsibility in non-academic pursuits do not have this effect. 11. Within high achieving classes studied, all had some type of positive reward system; e.g., "bionic handshakes," ice cream, teacher praise, or tokens that could be used to earn a prize. Thus there appears to be value in providing rewards. (Author)

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1 Teachers who allocate more time to a particular content area of the curriculum have students who achieve higher levels than teachers who allocate less time to that content area. The more time teachers spend teaching reading, for example, the greater their students' reading achievement.

2 Teachers who increase the amount of time students actually spend engaged in a learning activity will see the difference reflected in increased achievement. Allocating time for reading, in other words, isn't sufficient. The students also must be actively engaged in learning to read.

3 Teachers should ensure that the students spend over half of their time working on tasks that provide high success. Students who spend more time than the average in high-success activities have higher achievement scores. However, older students (fifth grade and over) and students generally skilled at school learning need a smaller percentage of time at the high success level. Nevertheless, it is seldom, if ever, desirable for students to be given tasks where they experience low success.

4 The BTES evidence suggests teachers who have the ability to diagnose students' skill levels generally have classrooms where students show a higher rate of engagement.

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